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DCI BRIEFING NOTES

CONGO

I. The plot which the Congolese army foiled on 30 May was less significant than President Mobutu's reaction to it.

A. The four main plotters were all run-of-the-mill civilian politicians. None had any particular political power, none had shown any conspiratorial skills, and the plot was never a real threat to Mobutu.

B. Mobutu nevertheless ordered their summary trial and public execution.

1. This is in line with other indications of a growing authoritarianism as Mobutu wrestles with the problem of making his authority felt throughout the country.

II. In breaking up the plot, the top ranks of the army once again proved their loyalty to Mobutu, but at the same time they demonstrated the degree to which Mobutu must cultivate that loyalty in order to stay in power.

CON-1

- A. Mobutu and his officers will probably remain interdependent for some time, with neither willing nor able to challenge the other.
- B. The officer corps will probably assume an ever-larger role in Congolese political life and will reinforce Mobutu's own authoritarian tendencies.

III. Some members of the frequently indiscreet Belgian Embassy in Leopoldville apparently were involved to a minor degree with the plotters, although no foreign embassy gave the plot any active support.

- A. The Belgian involvement will aggravate Mobutu's current animosity toward Belgium.
- B. His attitude may be reflected in a harder Congolese line in the current economic talks with Belgium, now recessed after two weeks of inconclusive negotiations.